

PASSPORT Pre-sessional Course

COURSE OUTLINE

The Heriot-Watt **Passport** course aims to help you get a head start in your studies. It is designed to build your competence in academic language and study strategies, which will enable you to perform to the best of your ability on your future degree. On this course you will begin to develop graduate attributes: 'the skills, knowledge and abilities of university graduates, beyond disciplinary content knowledge, which are applicable to a range of contexts and are acquired as a result of completing any degree' (Barrie, 2006: 217).¹ Graduate attributes include:

- a sense of 'research-mindedness' with a more analytical perspective on practice
- the ability to identify problems, formulate questions, interpret data to seek answers
- the ability to communicate complex ideas to different audiences, to listen and negotiate effectively
- the ability to derive meaning from complexity judging on the basis of evidence
- an openness to learning & positive orientation to new ideas & ways of thinking
- a tolerance for ambiguity and unfamiliarity

You will reflect on these attributes during the course and continue to develop them as you study on your degree.

The **Passport** course has 9 teaching weeks and one assessment week. Teaching is divided into two strands: **Academic Literacy** introduces you to a

range of genres (texts with conventional structures & purposes), study activities and assessment tasks that are typical at university. **Academic Engagement** involves you in discussion and critical reflection so you can learn how to interact appropriately in seminars and contribute evidenced-based views. You will listen to lectures and engage in activities to raise your awareness of the range of registers used in different contexts. There is a variety of assessment tasks. You will complete coursework tasks based on topics from your field, which will help you to transfer what you are learning to your degree studies. Academic Literacy will be assessed with coursework tasks and a 2 hour Reading for Writing exam. Academic Engagement will be assessed with coursework related to the weekly lecture, a poster presentation, and a 1.5 hour listening exam.

The coursework tasks enable you to work through the research process

- engaging with the literature of your field, finding and selecting relevant sources
- recording and evaluating sources in an annotated bibliography
- formulating a clearly defined question & presenting this in a research proposal
- showing engagement with the literature by writing a review of previous studies which shows the development and current state of the art of the field
- working in a group investigating a lecture topic, leading to a seminar discussion
- reflecting on what you have learnt and demonstrating the ability to apply it to your future goals

¹ **Reference:** Barrie, S.C. (2006) *Understanding what we mean by the generic attributes of graduates. Higher Education, 51, pp 215–241.*

LEARNING OUTCOMES—CRITERIA FOR REFLECTION ON THE COURSE

By the end of the course you are expected to have reached level B2 on the Common European Framework of Reference for Language (CEFR).² In practice this means you have a level of English which enables you to

- understand the main ideas of propositionally and linguistically complex speech on both concrete and abstract topics delivered in a standard dialect, including technical discussions in your field of specialization
- read with a large degree of independence, adapting style and speed of reading to different texts and purposes, and using appropriate reference sources selectively
- obtain information, ideas and viewpoints from highly specialized sources within your field
- communicate spontaneously with good grammatical control without much sign of having to restrict what you want to say or write, adopting a level of formality appropriate to the circumstances
- give clear, detailed descriptions and presentations on a wide range of subjects related to your field of interest, expanding and supporting ideas with subsidiary points and relevant examples
- write clear, detailed texts on a variety of subjects related to your field of interest, synthesizing and evaluating information and arguments from a number of sources
- use a sufficient range of language to give clear descriptions, express viewpoints and develop arguments, using some complex sentence forms and a range of vocabulary.

In addition to the language outcomes listed above you will have an orientation to studying which enables you to

- understand how knowledge is advanced through an exploration of problems in a field
- understand what the research process involves and how to approach research design
- critically evaluate published and unpublished sources or research results as evidence to support new knowledge claims
- exercise autonomy and initiative in time management and project management related to the research process
- reflect on how you have developed and achieved the learning outcomes of the course

Classes will consist of students wishing to study at both postgraduate and undergraduate level. All students who join a university in the UK can expect to engage with the research process and the findings from research in their field from the beginning of their degree. The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)³ recommends a focus on interactive learning, e.g. working in small groups on research projects, in order to provide a challenging learning experience and to encourage the development of independent learning and critical skills’.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment will be divided as follows:

1. **Academic Engagement 40%**, consisting of coursework (10%), listening final exam (15%) and poster interaction (15%)
2. **Academic Literacy 60%**, consisting of an annotated bibliography (1500 words) on a topic you might want to research (15%), a review of the literature (2500 words) developing the topic of your bibliography (20%), a reflective statement (10%) and a Reading for Writing exam (15%).

You are required to achieve a mark of 50% overall for the combined coursework, and exam components in order to be recommended to proceed to your degree studies at Heriot-Watt university.

² Adapted from CEFR, available online at http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_en.pdf

³ Adapted from Quality Enhancement Themes, The First Year Experience, available online at <http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/docs/publications/transition-to-and-during-the-first-year.pdf?sfvrsn=20>

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
10.00 – 11.00	Academic Literacy	Live lecture	Academic Literacy	Academic Literacy	Academic Literacy
11.00 – 11.30		Academic Engagement			
11.30 – 11.45	Break				
11.45 – 13.00	Academic Literacy	Academic Engagement	Academic Literacy	Academic Literacy	Academic Literacy
13.00 – 14.00	Lunch				
14.00 – 15.30	Academic Engagement	Optional Social & Cultural Event	Academic Engagement	Academic Engagement	Optional Social & Cultural Event
15.30 – 17.00					

COURSE TIMETABLE

The Passport course consists of two strands: **Academic Literacy** and **Academic Engagement**.

For **Academic Literacy** you will have classes from 10.00 to 13.00 Monday and Wednesday to Friday. This part of the programme aims to equip you with the necessary language and study competence for study at a UK University.

The **Academic Engagement** strand runs from 14.00 to 15.30 Monday, Wednesday and Thursday and on Tuesday there is a live lecture from 10.00-11.00am. This is followed by your **Academic Engagement** class which starts at 11.00am. This strand aims to develop your academic listening and speaking skills so that you can listen to lectures and participate in tutorials and seminar discussions. The weekly timetable is shown above.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT

There is a programme of social and cultural engagement activities, enabling you to mix with staff, students and the wider local community to gain opportunities for authentic language practice. These opportunities include social and cultural activities on Tuesday and Friday afternoons and at the Carbon Café and Topical Talks on Monday and Wednesday afternoons. Up-to-date information can be found in the **Course Calendar** and you can find more information on VISION and by looking at the Pre-Sessional noticeboard in the reception area of the Henry Prais building.

PASSPORT ASSESSMENT

Your assessment for the Passport course introduces you to the kind of assessments you will meet on your degree. You will complete coursework over the first nine weeks of the course and sit exams in week ten. The coursework consists of five components: (a) weekly submissions to Vision, (the VLE), which will be peer-reviewed and teacher reviewed and redrafted to form part of an Annotated Bibliography (component b); (b) an Annotated Bibliography, in which you demonstrate that you can collect and evaluate sources in a principled way (c) a Literature Review in which you develop the topic of your Annotated Bibliography to inform your readers (your peers) about the current state of the art (level of achievement) for research on this topic (d) a Lecture Investigation relating to the weekly lecture which involves working in a group leading to a seminar discussion; (e) a Reflective statement which demonstrates your awareness of what you have learned in the course.

(a) Weekly Coursework Submissions in Vision

Each week, in the first four weeks of your course, you will have an assignment of around 250 words, based on the topics you are studying that week. In the final three assignments, you will research and write about aspects of your field so that you can transfer what you are learning to your degree studies. Each assignment will be posted into the Discussion Board in Vision set up for your class. Each week, you will peer-review the submissions of two other students, evaluating their work according to set criteria. Once you have submitted your peer reviews in Vision, your teacher will then give you feedback on your own submission. If you do not give peer feedback, then you do not receive feedback from your teacher.

Your assignments are:

1. A statement outlining your purpose for studying & challenges you expect to face
2. A definition & explanation of a concept in your field
3. A summary of a paper that relates to the concept in # 2 [for your annotated bibliography]
4. An outline of a problem that relates to the concept in # 2

At the end of week 5 you will use the feedback you received from other students and your teacher for assignments 2, 3 and 4 so that you can redraft these to produce your annotated bibliography (1500 words). You will submit this as a hard copy and to Turnitin in Vision (see below for more information on how to do this).

(b) Annotated Bibliography (1,500 words)

An annotated bibliography consists of an introduction (1,000 words) and a list of references to books, articles, and documents. Each reference is followed by a brief (usually 70-100 words) descriptive and evaluative paragraph, called the annotation. Annotations are descriptive and critical; their purpose is to inform the reader of the relevance, accuracy, and quality of the sources referred to. An annotation attempts to help a reader decide whether the source will be relevant and reliable.

You will compile an annotated bibliography on a subject in your field that interests you and which will form the basis for your literature review. Your bibliography will be written for an academic reader who wants to begin reading in this area. Weekly coursework submissions 2, 3 & 4 above will help you to select a topic, write an introduction and write annotations.

The Annotated Bibliography is worth **15%** of your mark for the course.

(c) Your Literature Review (1,000 words)

A Literature Review is an overview of the current status of research on a particular aspect in your field. Review articles are often commissioned by journal editors from academics, who gather together the key articles which have contributed to the development of a research field and critically review these. Students normally prepare a literature review for a research project in which they establish a framework of previous relevant research which provides the foundation for the research they want to do. In both cases, it is important to classify and critically evaluate aspects of the selected articles because this enables the writer to note where there are limitations or gaps which could form the starting point for further research.

Compiling an annotated bibliography is the first step in preparing a literature review so you are expected to develop the topic of your annotated bibliography to produce a narrative (2,500 words) that outlines the level of current understanding of your topic.

The Literature Review is worth **20%** of your mark for the course.

Your oral skills will be assessed through a Poster Interaction, delivered in week 7 of the course, in which you produce a poster proposing the topic for your literature review. Your poster will refer to the sources in your annotated bibliography in order to outline the intended focus of your literature review. You should also indicate why this topic is important for your field. You will display the poster so you can discuss it with other students and tutors who come to view it.

Your Poster is worth **15%** of your mark for the course.

(d) Lecture tasks

Each week, starting in week 2 of the course, there is a lecture given by a researcher from various Schools in the university. You will be assigned to a group which undertakes an investigation of a lecture topic culminating in a class seminar, planned and delivered by your group.

This lecture-related task is worth **10%** of your mark.

(e) Your Reflective statement

At the end of the Pre-sessional English course you are expected to reflect on what you have learnt and demonstrate the ability to apply it to your future goals. In Week ten you are required to submit a piece of reflective writing, based on the following:

- Describe a specific situation or experience related to your studies in which you have made progress.
- Explain what was difficult or was a problem at first.
- Explain why it was difficult or a problem at the beginning.
- Explain in detail how you overcame this difficulty.
- Discuss what you have learnt from reflecting on the problem or experience.
- Identify new strategies or goals which you have formed relating to your future studies, based on this analysis.

You are not required to refer to academic literature for this assignment and you will need to write in the 1st person (using 'I') to explain what you thought, what you did and how your thinking changed.

Your reflective statement should be about 500 words. This reflection is worth **10%** of your mark.

Exams

In the final week of this course you will have examinations in Reading for Writing and Listening.

These exams together are worth **30%** of the course.

Grades for the coursework and exams will be combined to produce your final grade for the course.

Many of you will have taken a SELT (secure English language test) such as IELTS in order to be accepted at a UK university. While IELTS is a good indicator of a general competence in English it does not prepare you for the requirements of your university courses. At university you will have to engage in research which involves reading academic texts and explaining, comparing and evaluating the data that you find. On the pre-sessional course you will be able to practise these skills by researching topics related to your chosen degree and producing different types of academic writing based on evidence. You will also have opportunities to improve the interactive (listening and speaking) skills required at universities, for example in seminars.

SUBMISSION OF YOUR ASSESSMENTS

What and when to submit

The table below shows what you are required to submit and the date and time it is due.

Assessment	Components	% mark	Due Date
Exams – Academic Literacy	Reading & note-taking	7.5%	17.08.15
	Writing	7.5%	17.08.15
Exams – Academic Engagement	Listening	15%	18.08.15
	Poster individual proposal for Literature Review	15%	27.07.15
Coursework – Academic Engagement	Lecture Investigation	10%	14.08.15 10.00
Coursework – Academic Literacy	Annotated bibliography	15%	24.07.15 9.00 - 10.00
	Literature review	20%	14.08.15 10.00
	Reflective statement	10%	14.08.15 10.00

How to Submit

You are required to submit your work in two ways
a) as a hard copy on paper submitted to the course administrators
b) as an electronic copy submitted to Turnitin in Vision.

(a) Hard-copy submissions

Hard-copy submissions should be double-spaced in at least 12 pt Times New Roman font or similar. Use one-inch (2.54 cm) margins on all four sides of the paper. Leave a line space for a paragraph. You may print double-sided to save paper.

Please make sure you understand and follow the conventions for using the work of other writers in your own work and acknowledge your sources both in the text and in a correctly formatted list of references at the end of your work.

First drafts of your work can be handed to your tutor in class or reviewed online in the discussion board.


Final paper copies of your coursework will be submitted at the designated time shown in the table above. You will receive instructions from your tutor and on the noticeboard about where and when you should submit.

Use the cover page [found in Vision in the assessment area] and ensure that your name, your class name and your tutor's name are clearly shown. Please also sign the cover page to confirm that the work is your own and you have followed the conventions for correct use of the work of other writers.

For the coursework submission, please staple together one cover page, your annotated bibliography, your literature review and your reflective statement.

(b) Submission through Turnitin in Vision

Your redrafted annotated bibliography, your literature review and your reflection should also be submitted through Turnitin in Vision. Turnitin is a powerful tool designed to detect plagiarism but we will be using it as a teaching tool to show you how to cite sources correctly and avoid plagiarism. You will be able to see the originality report generated by Turnitin and you will be able to modify and resubmit your work. Below is an example of the link in Vision. Follow the online instructions to submit. Your tutor will explain this in class.

 **Coursework submission: lecture investigation**
Use this link to submit your preparation and research notes
[>> View/Complete](#)

 **Coursework submission: annotated bibliography**

Use this link to submit your annotated bibliography
>> [View/Complete](#)

 **Coursework submission: literature review**

Use this link to submit your literature review
>> [View/Complete](#)

 **Coursework submission: reflection**

Use this link to submit your reflective statement
>> [View/Complete](#)

PENALTIES FOR LATE SUBMISSION AND PLAGIARISM

In order to ensure equity and fairness so that all students are given the same chance to achieve good grades on this course, there are penalties for submitting work late or without following the rules for good scholarship expected at university.

(a) Late submission

You may submit your coursework online in Vision at any time up until the final submission deadline shown above. Note that Turnitin does not allow you to submit twice within a 24 hour period. Any part of your coursework which you submit after the due date and time will receive a reduction in your grade as follows:

Number of Working Days Late	Penalty
1	15% of original mark deducted
2	20% of original mark deducted
3	25% of original mark deducted
More than 3	Zero mark awarded

This policy is intended to ensure students do not achieve an advantage by submitting work beyond the deadline.

(b) Academic misconduct

The aim of the Pre-session programme is to raise your understanding of the expectations of scholarship in a UK university through writing in your own words and correctly referencing the work of others that you have used. The opposite of scholarship is plagiarism which means stealing the ideas or work of another person, whether intentionally or unintentionally. Examples of plagiarism include:

1. Cutting and pasting, copying or paraphrasing text too close to the original sources and presenting these without references in assessments as if they are your own work
2. Buying or commissioning whole or parts of assessments from internet sites, or essay writing services
3. Submitting fabricated work any part of which is made up or invented
4. Colluding by working together with other people on an assessment and then submitting this as if it is your own work, unless specifically asked to do this by your tutor

You are advised that while the university recommends working with someone else to check for errors and give feedback on your work, your assessments should be a representation of your own ability and not re-written by another person. If you plagiarise your work, or commit any of the above forms of academic misconduct, you will be penalised within the marking criteria for the relevant assessment.

For more information, please refer to www.hw.ac.uk/registry/discipline/plagiarism.htm

Opportunities to resubmit work following a fail grade

Students who achieved an overall Grade D (40% - 48%) may be offered the opportunity to redraft and resubmit a piece of coursework in order to achieve a C grade (50% pass) and progress to their degree programme.

Once the assessment board has considered the performance of all students at the end of the course, those students who did not achieve a pass may apply to redraft and resubmit the piece of coursework which achieved the lowest mark. They will be given one week to resubmit both hard copy and through Turnitin in Vision.

The decision following the resubmission is final. Students who still do not achieve the required grade will be offered a range of other options for continuing their academic preparation.

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